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LARRY FREUND/BELGRADE

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# YUGOSLAVS MARK RECORD CROP

ANNCR:

YUGOSLAV OFFICIALS ARE DISCUSSING A NEW FIVE YEAR AGRICULTURAL PLAN AS LATEST FIGURES CONFIRM THAT THE COUNTRY REGISTERED A RECORD MAIZE CROP DURING THE LAST HARVEST.

VOA CORRESPONDENT LARRY FREUND REPORTS FROM BELGRADE.

VOICE:

THERE IS STILL SOME UNCERTAINTY ABOUT THE MAIZE TARGET THAT THE YUGOSLAV AGRICULTURAL PLANNERS WILL SET IN THEIR NEW FIVE-YEAR GRAIN PLAN, ALTHOUGH IT WILL PROBABLY BE IN THE RANGE OF ELEVEN MILLION TONS A YEAR. BUT THE LATEST MAIZE CROP FIGURES SHOW THE COUNTRY'S FARMERS HAVE GATHERED A RECORD NINE POINT FOUR MILLION TONS IN THEIR LAST HARVEST. AND A LEADING BELGRADE NEWSPAPER HAS REPORTED THE VIEW THAT A GOAL OF MORE THAN DOUBLE THAT HARVEST WOULD BE REALISTIC.

A TOP AGRICULTURE OFFICIAL SAYS THAT LAST YEAR'S MAIZE HARVEST WAS SUCCESSFUL IN LARGE PART BECAUSE OF THE WEATHER. IT WAS WET AT THE RIGHT TIME HE SAYS AND DRY AT THE RIGHT TIME. BUT ALSO CRUCIAL, HE POINTS OUT, IS THE DEVELOPMENT IN YUGOSLAVIA OVER THE YEAR OF SPECIAL HYBRID SEEDS.

MUCH OF THE SEED RESEARCH IN AN INSTITUTE ACROSS THE SAVA RIVER FROM BELGRADE WAS DONE IN COOPERATION WITH AMERICAN SPECIALISTS. TODAY YUGOSLAV EXPERTS SAY THEY HAVE DEVELOPED SOME OF THE WORLD'S BEST HYBRID MAIZE SEEDS, AND YUGOSLAVIA EXPORTS THE SEEDS TO A NUMBER OF COUNTRIES, INCLUDING THE SOVIET UNION AND BULGARIA.

SOME EIGHTY-FIVE PERCENT OF YUGOSLAVIA'S ARABLE LAND IS OWNED BY PRIVATE FARMERS WITH A MAXIMUM OF TEN HECTARES

PER FARM. MOST OF THE RECORD MAIZE CROP CAME FROM THE PRIVATE HOLDINGS, ALTHOUGH ON THE AVERAGE THE FARMS IN WHAT IS CALLED HERE THE SOCIALIST SECTOR PRODUCED LARGER YIELDS. NEVERTHELESS YUGOSLAV FARM OFFICIALS SAY THAT IN SOME AREAS OF THE COUNTRY, PARTICULARLY IN THE FERTILE VOJVODINA CORN BELT, PRIVATE FARMERS MATCH OR EVEN EXCEED THE MAIZE PRODUCTION RATES IN THE LARGE AGRICULTURE COMBINE.

WHILE THE SOCIALIST SECTOR IN YUGOSLAVIA IS SLOWLY ABSORBING PRIVATE HOLDINGS, ABOUT TWENTY THOUSAND HECTARES A YEAR, THE GOVERNMENT IS OFFERING INVESTMENT AND TAX INCENTIVES TO MANY PRIVATE FARMERS TO ENCOURAGE BETTER OUTPUT. AGRICULTURE REMAINS A HIGH PRIORITY FOR THE YUGOSLAV GOVERNMENT AND IS EXPECTED TO ABSORB ABOUT ELEVEN PERCENT OF THE COUNTRY'S ANNUAL INVESTMENT IN THE YEARS AHEAD WITH THE HOPE FOR A RESULT OF A FOUR PERCENT ANNUAL PRODUCTION INCREASE.

THE AIM IN YUGOSLAVIA IS SELF-SUFFICIENCY IN MANY BASIC AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS ALONG WITH EXPORTS RATHER THAN IMPORTS OF OTHER FOODSTUFFS SUCH AS MAIZE. AS A RESULT OF THE RECORD MAIZE HARVEST, EXPERTS HERE IN BELGRADE SAY THE COUNTRY WILL PROBABLY BE ABLE TO EXPORT UPWARDS OF HALF A MILLION TONS OF GRAIN THIS YEAR. IN THE LONG RUN, OFFICIALS HERE ARE OPTIMISTIC THAT YUGOSLAVIA CAN REACH ITS FARMING TARGETS GIVEN THE RIGHT INVESTMENTS AND INCENTIVES TOGETHER WITH SOME LUCK WITH THE WEATHER.

JS/PY